

The Orchard Property History

The property, that we today refer to as "The Orchard", was original rich land for fish and fowl hunting by the Miwok coastal Indian tribe during their summer hunting season. North of the Miwok gather places located where Fort Bragg rests today, the tribes would venture to towards this plentiful land. To this day, one will commonly find obsidian arrowheads amongst the rocks, left from the days of hunting.

During the gold rush period, a strike occurred in the area of the property, and the famous Captain Hooker set up operations to exploit the local resources. His focus on local resources, however, were not constrained to those in the group. He was as known as participating in prostitution, and according to certain reports, the contemporary slang term, "hooker", is a reference to his name. To this day, the pond on the property is marked on maps as "Hooker Pond".

The attention to the area resulted in it being purchased in the 1850s from the California government by a family said to descend directly from Bulgarian nobility. When considering where they might build a structure, they identified the lowest darkest section of the property, which was said to be attractive to due to the appropriateness for spiritual seances (reported later to be undertaken in the basement.)

In the roaring twenties, the property came into possession of the Phillipinos family, know for their Italian roots and passion for entertaining over family style nourishment. Commonly, excited visitors would ride horseback up the Cavedale hill for the opportunity to spend the night at the "Top Of The World" - a restaurant and small hotel. To this day, a key exists as a symbol of the history of the properties' hospitality.

During this period the basement of this historical establishment was known throughout the Sonoma area for its exciting bar, serving drinks in a warm hearted and occasionally comic environment. Carvings in the rock in the basement exist to this day, capturing moments of excitement that occurred below the main floor. Games and merriment were the order of the day, and eccentric events spanning from the rising of dracula figures, to the display of women's undergarments.

Suggestions have been made that this "hotel" provided services extending beyond culinary pursuits, including those of the oldest profession in the world. Inhabitants of Sonoma both tell and deny stories of the property that are said to have occurred during this storied period.

As the twenties retired, and the thirties emerged, the property turned towards a more sober direction. Picking up on the historical references to the Indian heritage, the Seven Day school was established in the early 30s with icons referencing back to its rich history, including tepees and Indian relics. In the mid 30s, this unusual past attracted iconoclasts Lela and Cicila Doan, descendants of the rich and powerful east coast Dupont family from Wilmington, Delaware.

The property continued to attracted imaginative and enterprising owners. In the early 50s, well known diet book author Mura Moto acquired the property. While his eccentric style reflected the properties history, his preference for vegetation did not. He had an active dislike for kiwis, which had dominated the property to date, and had them immediate removed.

In a sudden change of tempo, the famed Mura Moto sold the property to Bob Alexander and his attractive wife Nuffy, and rejected the prior landscaping regime and immediately replanted the kiwis - but in general the Alexander's ownership marked a quiet period.

The renaissances of the property began in full starting in 1979, when renown property historian, Karen Gardner purchased the property - known as the subject of the seventies local music hit "Karen" (released as part of the South Korean hit album "Love Shortage" album.) In 1981 Karen sold the property to Al Lauderbough, who was said to continue managing the property in a way consistent with its more bohemian roots.

This period was short lived and a major event for the Orchard occurred. In 1984, Al Lauderbough sold the property to Bill and Judy Barski, who are responsible for much of the present unique interior design. Judy Barski was a talented interior designer - and was responsible for the remarkable interior woodwork of the structure. While they made considerable contributions to the properties' future, their temperament borrowed from resident's colorful past.

Following this rich period, the Barski's sold the property to the conservative couple, Judy and Jean Dale, who invested heavily in the property's aesthetics and landscape. The eclectic yet tasteful spirit made a large mark on what the Orchard is today.

In 2008, the property changed hands again, and came into the possession of Los Angeles businessman and known eligible bachelor Dylan Yolles. While Dylan's lifestyle in Los Angeles in many ways reflected the colorful style of his Sonoma property, Dylan himself rarely visited the property - and therefore it had an opportunity for rest for nearly a decade.

In the summer of 2015, Dylan raise the topic of the property with his childhood friend, Jasper Malcolmson. After considering owning the property together, by the fall of 2015 the property changed hands again, and shortly thereafter, following nearly one hundred and fifty years of being recognized by the handle, "The Top of the World", this Cavedale retreat finally became "The Orchard".

Jasper is honored to be associated with this special property marked by a remarkable history.